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1 August 1958

**Memorandum of Telephone Conversation with The Honorable Harry S. Truman**

At the request of the President, transmitted to me through the Secretary of State, I called Mr. Truman on 25 July, at Independence, Missouri. I found that he was then enroute to Independence from St. Louis, but reached him at Independence early on the morning of 26 July.

Mr. Truman greeted me warmly over the phone and said that he hoped that everything was going well with the Agency. I told him we were busy as he could well imagine.

I then told Mr. Truman that the President had asked me to get in touch with him and ask him whether, in view of critical developments in the world situation, he would like to have a briefing on the current situation from the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mr. Truman replied that he would appreciate it greatly, but never thought he should ask for such a thing because he thought it might be embarrassing. He added, "You don't know how much I appreciate this. I know that unless you have access to the information which CIA has, you don't really know what is going on or what the situation is."

Mr. Truman then added that he was in thorough sympathy with what we were trying to do and added one or two complimentary words with respect to the work which CIA was doing. He added that he would appreciate anything that we could give him, but stated that he did not want the Agency to go to any trouble or expense.

I expressed appreciation for what Mr. Truman had said and added that as President at the time CIA was organized, he had always been one of our best friends and supporters.

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As regards trouble and expense, I said that the President wished this briefing to be given if Mr. Truman desired it, and that it would be no trouble at all to the Agency to do it.

Arrangements for the briefing were then discussed and Tuesday afternoon at the Truman library in Independence was agreed upon.

Mr. Truman then spoke about his work in the library and expressed the hope that I would be able to have a look at it one of these days. I replied that I would not be able to come at this time because of the pressure of work here, but I would send one of my best men and I would try to get out later to see him whenever the situation permitted.

I added that my representative would be prepared to brief on the Near East situation; on questions bearing on the Soviet problem and generally on other critical matters in the world situation as Mr. Truman might desire. I suggested that at this first briefing, Mr. Truman could indicate other issues which might not be covered and also let us know as to his convenience for any future briefings. In conclusion, Mr. Truman reiterated his keen appreciation and thanks for the offer that had been made.

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A supplemental memorandum prepared by my briefing officer, [REDACTED] is attached.

ALLEN W. DULLES  
Director

AWD/ji/c

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Intelligence Briefing of Mr. Truman, 30 July 1958

1. Because of the plane's late arrival in Kansas City, 4:35 p.m. instead of 3:30 Tuesday, 29 July, which would bring me to Independence later in the afternoon, I called Mr. Truman from the airport and asked if it was convenient for him to receive me as soon as I could get from the airport to the Library or whether he preferred me to come Wednesday morning. Mr. Truman asked me to meet with him at 9:00 the following morning, Wednesday, 30 July, saying that we would then have plenty of time.

2. The briefing session Wednesday morning lasted from 9:00 to 10:20 and took place in Mr. Truman's private office in the Truman Library building. The briefing was very well received.

3. Mr. Truman's interest centered on Near Eastern problems and he read the pertinent section of the prepared briefing in its entirety. He interrupted his reading frequently to ask quick questions, to make comments, and to reminisce about Near Eastern personages. He recognized the sensitive nature of the information contained in the prepared briefing and expressed his appreciation for this information several times, assuring me that he understood the security problems involved.

4. He was particularly interested in our evidence of the UAR's role in the Lebanese situation and in the wide scope of Nasser's clandestine activities. It was his opinion that we would find the Grand Mufti's hand

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in Nassir's machinations and that the Grand Mufti should be kept under watch. He was concerned to learn that Prince Faysal of Saudi Arabia was in poor health, explaining that while he had never had much confidence in King Saud he had had hopes that the Prince would be able to keep things under control. He read our statement on Israel with great care. Likewise, the pace of his reading slowed down when he came to Kuwait and to the problems of Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somaliland. On several occasions Mr. Truman returned to and stressed the danger in Iran, illustrating his discussion by pointing to the Soviet-Iranian border on the large globe which stood by his desk and recalling details of the Soviet incursion in Azerbaijan at the close of World War II. When I remarked that the Shah was afraid to go home after the Iraqi coup Mr. Truman exclaimed that he had guessed as much. The fact that our intelligence supported his guess pleased Mr. Truman.

5. I briefed Mr. Truman orally on the Sino-Soviet problem, for it was apparent that he did not wish to read on in the prepared text but instead wished to talk and ask questions. Where possible I referred him to sections in the text as part of my response to his questions and in this way Mr. Truman read our pages on Indonesia and on Latin America.

6. In general it was apparent from Mr. Truman's comments that he is prepared for more crises bringing bad news not only in the Near East but elsewhere in the world of emerging nationalist states. He voiced the opinion that a generation may pass before these new states and some old

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ones as well, such as those of Latin America, will be sufficiently stable and enlightened to appreciate the danger of Communist totalitarianism.

7. Mr. Truman was obviously pleased to see your "Briefing Notes" for the "Meeting at the White House with Congressional Leaders," dated July 14, 1958, and thanked you for the opportunity to read them. He read every word and expressed his emphatic agreement with the conclusions.

8. I found an opportunity to show Mr. Truman the Central Intelligence Bulletin for 29 July. He was very interested in the Bulletin's development and recalled his own part in its origin.

9. Mr. Truman would appreciate being briefed whenever a crisis develops on which he may have to comment publicly. I believe he intends to discuss this matter with you. Although I offered to discuss specific arrangements then and there he was disinclined to commit himself to any schedule. It would be very helpful to us if Mr. Truman would agree to take the initiative and call for briefings. This principle governed our relations with Mr. Stevenson and Mr. Kefauver in 1956 and is the best way of avoiding possible misunderstandings, in fact the only way if regular scheduled briefings are not desired.

/s/

  
Deputy Assistant Director  
Current Intelligence

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